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THE WHITE HOUSE

WASHINGTON

April 12, 1983

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MEMORANDUM FOR THE PRESIDENT
THE VICE PRESIDENT
THE SECRETARY OF STATE
THE SECRETARY OF DEFENSE
THE DIRECTOR, OFFICE OF MANAGEMENT AND BUDGET
THE DIRECTOR OF CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE
THE UNITED STATES REPRESENTATIVE TO THE UNITED NATIONS
THE CHAIRMAN, JOINT CHIEFS OF STAFF
THE ACTING DIRECTOR, ARMS CONTROL AND DISARMAMENT AGENCY
THE DIRECTOR, SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY POLICY

SUBJECT: Report of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces

Attached is a brief synopsis of the President's Commission on Strategic Forces report and Defense's Strategic Forces Technical Assessment Review. The complete report and assessment summary were forwarded to you a few days ago for background prior to the upcoming NSC meeting.

Robert C. McFarlane for
William P. Clark

Attachment

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REPORT OF THE PRESIDENT'S COMMISSION ON STRATEGIC FORCES AND DEFENSE'S STRATEGIC FORCES TECHNICAL ASSESSMENT

Issue

Recommendations on and assessment of Strategic Forces to the President.

Facts

The President's Commission completed the review of our strategic forces on April 6, 1983 and the results were briefed to the President on April 11. Defense's Strategic Forces Technical Assessment Report was completed on March 31, 1983 and will be provided as an attachment to the President's recommendation to the Congress.

As reflected in the Commission's report, the members have unanimously agreed on the following recommendations:

- Continue our strategic modernization program recommended by the President to Congress in October 1981 with first priority on improving command, control and communications for our strategic forces, and continuation of our bomber, Trident submarine, and air-launched cruise missiles programs.

- Modernize our ICBM forces.

  -- First, immediately produce and deploy 100 MX missiles, in existing Minuteman silos at F. E. Warren AFB, Wyoming. Due to the long lead times involved, "immediate" in this case means a first deployment in December 1986, with the deployment complete by the end of the decade.

  -- Second, begin engineering design of a small, single warhead ICBM leading to the initiation of full-scale development in 1987 and an initial operating capability in the early 1990s. The way the uncertainties are resolved pertaining to Soviet strategic programs, arms control technology, and cost should and will influence the pace of the small missile program.

- Conduct vigorous research into, and the most rigorous examination of, all forms of ballistic missile defense. Development of penetration aids for our own ballistic missile is also recommended.

- Proceed with a specific program to resolve uncertainties regarding silos and shelter hardness, a serious study of fratricide effects, and vigorous investigation of different types of land-based vehicles and launchers.

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- Continue ambitious, yet serious, arms control negotiations to reach agreements that are balanced, promote stability in time of crisis, constitute force reductions, and are verifiable.

In comparison to the closely spaced basing program recommended in November 1982, this program is about $1 billion per year less over the next five years and yields a net savings of $3 billion over the next five year period, 1984-1988.

The Commission's recommendations are based upon the results of 28 meetings and views from over 200 widely recognized experts from diverse backgrounds such as foreign policy, national security, arms control, intelligence, science and technology. Detailed rationale for the recommendations are included in the report. There are no illusions that the recommendations will completely satisfy anyone, but represents the Commission's effort to develop a framework to help produce a national consensus on both a strategic modernization program and arms control.

In passing the FY 1983 Continuing Resolution, the Congress requested submission of a technical assessment report on closely spaced basing, basing alternatives, and ICBM alternatives, a comparative assessment of alternative non-ICBM strategic programs, and a reaffirmation of closely spaced basing or a proposed alternative.

The technical assessment, concerning the ICBMs, contains the following:

- Examination of four missile alternatives including Peacekeeper, the common missile, improving current Minuteman IIIs, and a small missile.

- Assessment of nine basing alternatives including closely spaced basing, closely spaced based with concealment, widely spaced basing, south side basing, multiple protective shelters, road mobile -- public highways, hardened mobile -- military reservations, deep basing, and existing Minuteman silos.

Conclusions reached include the following:

- Peacekeeper has the highest military capability and can be available the earliest - 1986.

- The small missile is the only missile alternative that could be transported easily in a mobile deployment and could be available some time after 1990.

- A common missile provides no advantages over Peacekeeper and would not be ready for deployment before 1990.

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- An improved Minuteman III could not be deployed prior to 1988, and lacks the flexibility and arms control leverage of Peacekeeper.

- Minuteman silos, closely spaced basing, and widely spaced basing, all with Peacekeeper, provide the earliest initial operational capability.

- Hardened basing complicates planning and increases attack price for the Soviets since they would be forced to use larger yield weapons, reversing their trend toward multiple smaller yield warhead missiles.

- Mobility creates additional difficulties for the Soviets because they must develop new techniques for threatening a mobile system.

- Ballistic missile defense can raise Soviet uncertainty in attack outcome and increase the attack price.

The assessment concludes that a combination of deployment and technology program alternatives may represent the best approach for modernizing the U.S. ICBM force.

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